**SickKids scientists’ serve more than a refreshing pint at Duggan’s Brewery**

Personalized medicine was on the menu last night at Duggan’s Brewery where community members gathered to listen to SickKids and University of Toronto experts take part in SickKids Café Scientifique – *Personalized Medicine: It’s all about the fit of the genes*. By 6 p.m. it was standing room only as Gwen Burrows, director, Strategic Projects, Research Institute, SickKids, and president, Couchiching Institute of Public Affairs got the discussion underway.

“We can use genome sequencing to better understand ourselves,” said [Dr. Steve Scherer](http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Directory/People/S/Stephen-Scherer.html) a genetic researcher, who started off the conversation by re-introducing this breakthrough research in personalized medicine.

[Dr. Seem Mital](http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Directory/People/M/Seema-Mital.html), SickKids cardiologist, stunned the audience when she shared that “one in five people suffer from adverse drug reactions, and the annual cost of caring for these cases exceeds the GDP of Greece.” She continued to discuss the options for preventing these incidents, including administering a genetic test to determine how a patient will metabolize a drug. Since everyone’s genome sequence is different, reactions to the same drug will be different as well.

[Dr. Michael Szego](http://www.jointcentreforbioethics.ca/people/szego.shtml), U of T bioethicist, added further flavour to the conversation around the ethical challenges we face with genetics and personalized medicine. Through this lens he asked the room to consider if anyone would want to know the genome sequence of their child, even if it meant knowing they would develop a disease later on in life. He also discussed the issues around genome sequencing as a consumer product, and how we should be careful with the results, citing privacy and lack of full knowledge as two major considerations.

Following the panellists’ presentations, the audience was given the opportunity to join in the conversation and ask questions. It was a lively discussion which covered the themes of social or cultural implications of DNA sequencing; sharing of knowledge and data among researchers, private industry and globally between countries; and the effects personalized medicine might have on the costs of health care delivery.

SickKids Café Scientifique is supported by the SickKids Research Institute, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs. Stay tuned to our SickKids [event calendar](http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Events-Calendar/events-calendar.html) for the next Café Scientifiquethis spring!